

China Open

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Beijing, China

Jessica Pegula

Press Conference



J. PEGULA/A. Tomljanovic

6-0, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions.

Q. Coming off the semifinal appearance at the US Open, taking a couple of weeks off obviously, what was your mindset looking like coming into the Asian Swing and are right now for the China Open?

JESSICA PEGULA: I was excited wanting to play Billie Jean King Cup last week in Shenzhen. I think that was kind of a nice reset for me, playing in a different format, get to be playing with a team, just to kind of be over here early but with a bunch of girls that you're friends with and stuff like that and practicing with and competing with. I think it was a nice kind of switch, mindset switch, a little bit. So that was really fun, enjoyable. We got to be here a week earlier, already used to the time zone, time change, which I actually think was really helpful.

Yeah, we got to play a few matches there and come here and be ready to compete. Yeah, I'm happy to start the Asian Swing. I think that was a nice start to it. Happy with my win today.

But, yeah, kind of ready for this long swing coming up towards the end of the year.

Q. My understanding is that your popularity has hit an increase in the last few years in this country with the Chinese fans embracing you in different ways. Is that something you have noticed over the time of coming here? What has really stood out to you with respect to the fan culture here?

JESSICA PEGULA: I've definitely noticed it a lot this year. Last year I noticed it, but I don't know why it feels like more this year.

Now I have a nickname. I think they're so creative with a lot of off-court stuff, doing stuff for the podcast that we started. They're very creative I keep saying. Like, they

definitely research a lot of things.

Even though I did feel it last year, this year it feels like it's a lot more. I'm not sure why. Maybe over the years gaining fans and stuff like that. Or maybe I'm just embracing it a little bit more.

It's been a lot of fun. I definitely can feel a lot more support coming here.

Q. You mentioned the podcast. How has that felt going into that world and becoming an active player podcaster, which is a different thing?

JESSICA PEGULA: That was kind of one of the reasons we wanted to do it, because we felt like we were still relevant and playing (smiling). We had a really great year, all of us. At least me and Maddie. Obviously Jenny trying to come back soon, maybe next year. Des being on tour. We were like, Why should we wait? It's something we can do fun off the court.

First logistics-wise we had to narrow down how easy or how hard it was going to be. It actually ended up I think a lot easier than we had planned.

Once we filmed the first one, we were like, Oh, we can definitely do this. We were going to kind of trial and see how it worked with everyone's schedules. Honestly, it's been much easier. That's been really fun.

Again, people keep listening to it and feeling like a lot of comments I see, It feels like we're just on a phone call with you guys, or we are sitting and having coffee with you, or having a glass of wine, or we're on FaceTime with you.

And that is kind of how it feels to us, too. We have a little bit of structure, but it's very therapeutic for us to talk about things that are happening on the road.

We really wanted to give insight behind the scenes because we see like fans only see us as one-dimensional athletes on the court. There's a lot of really kind of fun and more normal things off the court that really do happen to us. We really kind of wanted to share that in that way.



It's been nice to see the response from everybody. I think we were a little surprised about how many people really enjoyed it almost because we had no idea what to expect.

It's been such a cool experience, especially when you're doing it with a bunch of friends and you're having fun with it. It's a learning curve for us, but we've really enjoyed it.

Q. Speaking of behind the scenes, what are your thoughts on the facilities here this year in terms of comparing it to what you saw and experienced in years past? What has stood out to you or impressed you at the China Open this year?

JESSICA PEGULA: I feel like the facilities definitely have improved. I think the food has improved. The player areas have definitely improved.

I think it's always nice when you can come back to a place and you feel like maybe your feedback or the player feedback is taken into consideration. They're trying to make it better for all the players.

It's such a big event, not only for just here in China but for us as well, a big 1000. We definitely want to come and play. I think most of us do anyways. But when you can feel like you're treated better and better every single year, that always is a nice feeling as a player.

I think there's a lot of things that have already improved. Yeah, I was excited to be able to come back and see those improvements being made and changed. It makes the long two weeks a lot more enjoyable, a lot easier.

Yeah, it's always appreciated.

Q. Have you had a chance to do much off court, any touristy things so far?

JESSICA PEGULA: So far actually, no, I haven't really done anything. I don't know why. I had, like, the whole week. That's what happens. You kind of just get stuck at the courts or the schedule kind of gets messed up and next thing you know it's been a week and you did nothing.

I actually really haven't done much this year. Shenzhen, walked around the city a little bit. That was kind of nice. Haven't been back there in a while, since the WTA event. That was exciting.

But yeah, so far so good.

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